

# Suicide Prevention Education

*Educational material from the Trevor Project (www.thetrevorproject.org)*

## **Warning Signs:**

- A tendency toward isolation and social withdrawal
- Increasing substance abuse
- Expression of negative attitudes toward self
- Expression of hopelessness or helplessness
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Giving away valued possessions
- Expression of a lack of future orientation: “It won’t matter soon anyway.”
- For someone who has been very depressed, when that depression begins to lift, the individual may be at INCREASED risk of suicide, as the individual will have the psychological energy to follow-through on suicidal ideation.

## **How You Can Help a Suicidal Person:**

**Listen.** Suicidal people frequently feel no one understands them, that they are not taken seriously, and that no one listens to them.

**Accept the person’s feelings as they are.** Do not try to cheer the person up by making, positive, unrealistic statements. Do not joke about the situation.

**Do not be afraid to talk about suicide directly.** You will not be putting ideas into the person’s head. It may, in fact, be dangerous to avoid asking a person directly if s/he is feeling suicidal.

**Ask them if they have developed a plan for suicide.** The presence of a well-developed plan indicates more serious intent.

**Remove anything dangerous from the person’s home that might be used in a suicide attempt (e.g., gun, knife, razor blades, sleeping pills).**

**Tell a trusted adult.** Do not keep it a secret. If someone you know is considering suicide, an adult is the best person to handle the situation and offer that person help. Make No Deals to keep secret what a suicidal person has told you.

**Express your concern for the person** and your hope that the person will not choose suicide but instead will stick it out a little longer.

**Remind the person that depressed feelings *do* change over time.**

**Point out that when death is chosen, it is final**—it cannot be changed.

**Develop a plan for help with the person.**

**If you cannot develop a plan and a suicide attempt is imminent, seek outside emergency help from a hospital, mental health clinic or call “911.”**

**For more information:**

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)

World Health Organization – Suicide Prevention (SUPRE)

[www.who.int/mental\\_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/](http://www.who.int/mental_health/prevention/suicide/suicideprevent/en/)

American Association of Suicidology

[www.suicidology.org/](http://www.suicidology.org/)

American Academy for Child and Adolescent Psychology

<http://aacap.org/page.wv?name=Teen+Suicide&ion=Facts+for+Families>

Department of Health and Human Services – National Strategy for Suicide Prevention

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/suicideprevention/fivews.asp>

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education

[www.save.org/](http://www.save.org/)

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)